



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.54

Subject:	Provision of Voluntary Post-Custody Services to Young Adults
Authority:	The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999; TCA 37-5-106
Standards:	DCS Practice Model 8-108, PA-CM 4.01, PA-CM 4.06
Application:	All DCS Employees with Interdependent Living Services Responsibilities

Policy Statement:

The provision of Voluntary Post-Custody Services is an extension of Interdependent Living Services, and is designed to expand upon such service options for young adults who, a) emancipate to adulthood from state custody and, b) are at risk of emancipating to adulthood from state custody, to support permanency options and the acquisition and maintenance of life skills. DCS shall make Voluntary Post Custody Services available to eligible young adults exiting custody at 18, or up to their 19th birthday and requesting to receive such services. These services may be provided directly by DCS (heretofore designated as DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services), or through contracts established with provider agencies. Voluntary Post-Custody Services may include rental assistance, other housing assistance, case management services, financial support for education and/or job training, and other Interdependent Living Services deemed necessary. Further, DCS may provide assistance to young adults requesting re-entry for such services. Voluntary Post-Custody Services may be provided up to the 21st birthday, and may be extended based on a young adult's continued eligibility. These services and benefits are not entitlements, but designed to support assessed needs and concrete goals.

Purpose:

Young adults at risk of emancipating to adulthood from state custody require unique planning and decision-making procedures to meet their needs, as circumstances exist that require permanency plan review, placement stability and discharge planning. This policy establishes procedures and protocols to plan and provide for this transition, and to make Voluntary Post-Custody Services available to eligible youth and young adults.

Procedures:

A. Process for Young Adults to Exit Care and Immediately Enter Voluntary Post-Custody Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An Interdependent Living (IL) Program Specialist, or representative of the Office of Interdependent Living, shall meet with designated regional DCS staff on a monthly basis to identify youth age seventeen (17) or older who are at risk of emancipating to adulthood from state custody. Mutual decisions shall be reached regarding the extent to which staff from the DCS Office of Interdependent Living shall provide technical assistance (such as information and advisement) as part of the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) preparation, as it applies to this policy, or directly participate in the scheduled CFTM's.
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2. DCS Office of Interdependent Living staff shall share the information determined with applicable regional Team Coordinators, Team Leaders and Family Service Workers on a monthly basis. Summary reports shall also be shared with the Regional Administrators monthly.
3. The Team Leader and **Family Service Worker (FSW)** shall ensure that a Special Called CFTM, as defined by [DCS Policy 31.7, Building Preparing and Maintaining Child and Family Teams](#), is convened at least six (6) months prior to youths' 18th birthday, or six (6) months prior to anticipated discharge if youth are delinquent and anticipated to remain in DCS custody past eighteen (18) years of age. In addition, the same procedures shall be applied as appropriate to a Placement Stability CFTM. When there is a post-custody unit or post-custody Family Service Worker available in the region in which a young adult will receive DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services, the CFTM shall consider the appropriateness of transferring a young adult's case upon discharge. This decision shall be included in the IL Plan.
4. It is not necessary that an IL Program Specialist attend every such CFTM, but shall be in attendance when circumstances exist that require additional support as outlined in item 1 of this policy section. The applicable regional and IL Program staff shall make this decision jointly. If it is determined that an IL Program Specialist should attend a CFTM, the Family Service Worker shall provide notice of the CFTM to the Office of Interdependent Living at least ten (10) days in advance utilizing the established protocol (**CS-0746, Meeting Notification**).
5. The Family Service Worker shall develop a transition plan as outlined in DCS Policy [16.51, Interdependent Living Plan](#), utilizing the Interdependent Living Plan section of the youth's permanency plan, in the context of the Child and Family Team Meeting. Goals shall be developed with youth that include the possibility and benefits of receiving Voluntary Post-Custody Services, to include Transitional Living Services if necessary or appropriate.
6. Some youth enter state custody within six months of their likely emancipation to adulthood. It is appropriate under such circumstances for the FSW to develop the Transition Plan concurrently with the initial permanency plan. All other procedures associated with this process shall be followed.
7. The FSW shall then ensure that a Discharge Planning CFTM as outlined in [DCS Policy 31.7, Building Preparing and Maintaining Child and Family Teams](#), is convened at least thirty (30) calendar days before the youth exits state custody. The youth and Child and Family Team shall review the transition plan, and the FSW shall ensure that all goals are updated as needed to reflect the youth's current needs and decisions. When there is a post-custody unit or post-custody Family Service Worker available in the region in which a young adult will receive DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services, a representative of this unit shall attend the discharge staffing if the youth is accepting DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services. If it is determined that an IL Program Specialist and/or post-custody staff member should attend such a CFTM, the Family Service Worker shall provide notice

of the CFTM to the IL Program Specialist and/or post-custody staff member serving the applicable region of commitment at least ten (10) days in advance. (CS-0192, Notice of Staffing.

8. The FSW and the young adult must review **form CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services** during the Discharge Planning CFTM. The form must be completed and signed to begin the process of the post custody intake, and filed in the youth's case record.
9. The Regional Administrator or designee and the Interdependent Living Director or designee shall review and approve the services and entry into **DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services**. This shall be accomplished by the Family Service Worker ensuring that **form CS-0489, Justification for Providing Services to Persons Over Eighteen** is completed and all applicable signatures procured following case review. The DCS **Office of Interdependent Living** must receive and approve provision of services from custody to post-custody status. This form must be filed in the youth's case record.
10. Upon exit from custody, the FSW must complete all applicable areas of the exit survey in TN Kids, update the Family Functional Assessment and close the custodial episode. The FSW and Team Leader shall open a post custody intake in TN Kids within ten (10) days of case closure.
11. The FSW and Team Leader shall also ensure that all other areas in TNKIDS are closed or adjusted as applicable, (i.e. placement status), to avoid the duplication of services. No services shall be provided by DCS until the custody episode is closed and a post-custody episode is opened.
12. If a decision was made to transfer a case to a post-custody unit or post-custody FSW, all procedures for transferring a case shall be followed. The case shall be transferred within ten (10) calendar days of case closure.
13. If a young adult's request is to not enter DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services, the FSW shall ensure that form **CS-0759 Refusal of DCS Post Voluntary Custody Services Notification – Youth Leaving Custody** is completed and all applicable signatures procured. However, every effort must be made to encourage youth to consider the available service options.
14. All youth participating in transition meetings, as described in this policy, shall receive a standard packet of information that youth can reference to facilitate this decision. This packet must include a description of voluntary service options and community resources available in the area the youth plans to reside in following discharge. The Interdependent Living Program Specialist shall make this packet available. The FSW shall ensure that the transition plan is updated to include this information.
15. The FSW shall ensure that the transition of young adults with special needs is addressed according to the applicable DCS policies: [19.7, Transitioning DCS youth Into Adult Behavioral Mental Health Services](#) and [19.8 Transitioning Youth Into the Division of Mental Retardation Services](#), and

	the goals established in the Interdependent Living Plan (see number 3 of this section and DCS Policy 16.51 Interdependent Living Plan).
B. Process for Young Adults to Exit Care and Receive Transitional Living Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The same process of transition planning and case closure shall be utilized when contracted Transitional Living Services are warranted as the Voluntary Post-Custody Services option. However, a DCS post-custody intake in TNKIDS may not be necessary depending upon the specific Transitional Living service being provided; In many instances, the Transitional Living Service provider shall assume full responsibility for all aspects of service provision, post-custody. The determination regarding the need for a DCS post-custody intake will be made as part of the youth's specific transition plan. 2. The procedures for making referrals to such Transitional Living service providers are available through the DCS Office of Interdependent Living, and can be procured from the Interdependent Living Program Specialists.
C. Process for Young adults to Enter Post Custody Services Following a Break in Involvement with the DCS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At any point between emancipating from state custody and turning 21 years old, a young adult may return to DCS and request to receive voluntary post custody services. 2. A young adult may return to any DCS field office and request services. Young adults may be served in the community where they live without having to return to the community where they exited custody. In these cases, the applicable DCS regions are encouraged to communicate extensively to ensure that young adults are served appropriately. 3. The young adult shall complete form CS-0778, Application for Post-Custody Services and submit this information to the designated regional staff. 4. The designated regional staff, in tandem with the Office of Interdependent Living, shall review the young adult's application and case record in order to determine service eligibility (DCS Policy 16.52 Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post Custody Services). This review may initiate a referral to Transitional Living Services (Section D). 5. The decision to provide a young adult with DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services in this situation must be recommended by the Child and Family Team Meeting and planning process. All aspects of this process must be followed as outlined in this policy. However, because planning and approval are for the purpose of returning a young adult to receive services and not for discharge, the CFTM must be convened within ten (10) days of the young adult's request for Voluntary Post-Custody Services. 6. If it is clear that a young adult can benefit from DCS assistance, and he or she is willing to sign form CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services and participate in developing a post-custody plan, the case manager and supervisor shall open a post custody intake. All procedures applicable to the approval of a DCS Voluntary Post-Custody case intake must be applied. (See sect. A of

	<p>this policy) The post-custody intake shall be opened within ten (10) days.</p> <p>7. There are times when an otherwise eligible young adult returning to request services may be homeless, or experiencing other circumstances that constitute a risk to the young adult's safety or well being. When such circumstances are assessed to exist, it is acceptable to request an emergency review and approval of services by the RA or designee to facilitate provision of needed funding until the outlined process can be followed.</p>
D. Process for Young Adults to Receive Transitional Living Services Following a Break in Involvement with the Department	<p>1. Transitional Living Services are considered a version of Voluntary Post-Custody Services. The establishment of Transitional Living Services through contracted providers may be utilized as voluntary post-custody service options. The decision to utilize such options will be made by the young adult and the Child and Family Team.</p> <p>2. The same process of transition planning and service provision shall be utilized for Transitional Living eligible young adults who return to request services following a break in involvement with DCS. (<u>See Sect. B of this policy</u>). However, the added component of referral to a Transitional Living service provider must be considered and may not require a DCS post-custody intake.</p> <p>3. The procedures for making referrals to Transitional Living service providers are available through the DCS Office of Interdependent Living, and can be procured from the Interdependent Living Program Specialists.</p>
E. Case Management Services	<p>1. Young adults receiving DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Service are entitled to case management services, and such services shall be provided by the assigned Family Service Worker.</p> <p>2. Interdependent Living Program Specialists shall serve the function of supportive advisors, relaying pertinent skill and content information. It is appropriate for the Interdependent Living Program Specialists to serve in a centralized monitoring function for young adults receiving DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services who are attending post-secondary educational programs, and for such youth receiving the Interdependent Living Allowance.</p> <p>3. The assigned FSW shall assist young adults in assessing strengths and needs, identifying resources, navigating educational systems, accessing health care, budgeting and developing healthy relationships.</p> <p>4. The assigned FSW shall assist young adults with developing the capacity to financially self-support, but to also access financial support via the appropriate DCS and community resources when needed. Additionally, it is appropriate to assist young adults in accessing IL Wraparound funding through the Regional Funding Units to support goals established in the young adult's Independent Living Plan.</p>

5. Contact with a young adult in DCS voluntary post custody service should meet his or her needs. Face-to-face contact is required every other month, and it is the responsibility of the assigned FSW to provide this. There should also be monthly telephone or e-mail contact by the assigned FSW. The FSW shall make at least one home visit to the young adult's residence upon receipt of the case. The assigned FSW shall also make at least one home visit to the young adult's residence whenever the young adult establishes a different residence. As a young adult enters a new job, job-training program, college etc., it may be necessary for contact to increase until the young adult is established.

Note: An exception is allowable when a young adult receiving DCS Voluntary Post Custody Services resides in another state solely for the purpose of attending a post-secondary educational program, but maintains Tennessee residency ([Policy 16.52: Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post-Custody Services, Section P, 2](#)). In such cases, the assigned FSW is required to make monthly phone contact with the young adult. The FSW is also required to make face-to-face contact at the young adult's residence on occasions when the young adult returns to Tennessee, such as during school breaks.
6. Young adults should also have an adult resource that can serve as support in emergency and non-emergency situations. The FSW shall monitor such mentoring relationships, and provide advisement to young adults should concerns arise.
7. All interactions with young adults must be documented in TN KIDS. Monthly entries must be entered into TN KIDS referencing all case management face-to-face and telephone contacts.
8. DCS shall continue to assist the young adult in DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services by coordinating access to health care and dental services through public health insurance, employment or college health insurance options as available. Young adults should be counseled to continue to use the custodial guidelines for dental screens and regular medical check-ups to monitor their health and well being. It is the responsibility of DCS to assist a young adult with any necessary healthcare advocacy. (Refer to [Protocol for Continuation of TennCare Eligibility for Children Exiting Custody](#).)
9. Services provided to young adults must support the goals outlined in the Interdependent Living Plan (see [DCS Policy 16.51, Interdependent Living Plan](#)), and form **CS-0489, Justification for Providing Services to Persons Over Eighteen**.
10. The assigned FSW shall also assist young adults with family concerns and facilitate contact with siblings still in state custody.
11. The Family Service Worker is responsible for filing the applicable forms and collateral documents in the young adult's case file.

	<p>12. Young adults receiving certain Transitional Living services may receive all case management from the service provider, depending on the scope of service and eligibility.</p>
F. Termination of Voluntary Post-Custody Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There are circumstances that may warrant the termination of DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Services. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The young adult has successfully completed the goals outlined on the Interdependent Living Plan, to include completion of the identified educational or vocational program. The young adult not maintaining one or more criteria of eligibility. (See DCS Policy 16.52, Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post-Custody Services, for details) The young adult is convicted of a felony and/or any crimes against a person. The young adult not making contact with DCS or a service provider in excess of sixty (60) consecutive days. The Family Service Worker shall make efforts to contact the young adult if the issue is one of no contact. There shall be, at a minimum, one attempt at a face-to-face contact and one phone contact within a 60 day period. If efforts to contact the young adult are not successful, the young adult shall be notified in writing that DCS plans on terminating Voluntary Post-Custody Services CS-0760 Notice of Denial, Termination or Change in DCS Post Voluntary Custody or Scholarship Services. The specific reasons shall be clearly outlined in this correspondence. If termination is considered due to lack of contact, the notification shall be made via certified letter with a response requested within ten (ten) calendar days. CS-0761 Program Review Request shall be included with this correspondence. This notification shall also be documented in a case recording. The young adult shall have the opportunity to participate in a Child and Family Team Meeting. This CFTM shall be convened within ten (10) calendar days of the termination notification. The FSW or service provider shall develop a Transition Plan that identifies supports and services available in the young adult's community that may be accessed following discharge, or the availability of service options such as Transitional Living. In some instances, provider contracts require that their program's staff develop the Transitional Plan, with input from the young adult and the Child and Family Team. A discharge date shall be determined at this CFTM, and included in the Transition Plan.

	5. The FSW shall complete form CS-505 DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Discharge Summary and close the TNKids post-custody intake.
G. Due Process for the Appeal of Service-Related Decisions	Youth and Young Adults have the right to appeal decisions made by DCS related to the provision of voluntary post custody services; this includes the decision to terminate voluntary post-custody services. In such cases, the following procedure shall be followed (See DCS Policy 16.52, Eligibility for Interdependent Living and Voluntary Post-Custody Services , sect. O for details)
H. Services to Young Adults with Special Needs	The FSW shall follow the transition planning procedures for youth determined to have special needs as outlined in sect. A of this policy. It is essential that the established protocols related to the establishment of appropriate adult services be followed, based on the youth's identified disability: See DCS Policies 19.7, Transitioning DCS Youth Into Adult Behavioral Mental Health Services and 19.8, Transitioning Youth Into The Division of Mental retardation Services . The procedures established for identifying appropriate transitional goals and resources for young adults with special needs, as outlined in DCS Policy 16.51 shall be followed.
Forms:	CS- 0650 - Interdependent Living Plan CS- 0488 – Rights and Responsibilities to Receive DCS Post Custody Services CS- 0489 - Justification for Providing Services to Persons Over 18 CS-0759- Refusal of Post Custody Services Notification-Youth Leaving Custody CS- 0778- Application for Post Custody Services CS-505 DCS Voluntary Post-Custody Discharge Summary CS-0760-Notice of Denial, Termination, Termination or Change in DCS Post Voluntary Custody or Scholarship Services CS-0761-Program Review Request CS-0746 Meeting Notification
Collateral Documents:	Essential Documents List Protocol for Continuation of TennCare Eligibility for Children Exiting Custody